
Transportation Committee

HB 1368

Brief Description: Modifying the requirement to periodically replace license plates.

Sponsors: Representatives Herrera, Eddy, Haler, Takko, Orcutt, Van De Wege, Smith, Short, Bailey, Condotta, Warnick, Goodman, Kretz, Johnson, Ross, Newhouse, Shea, Pearson, Hasegawa, Rolfes, Sells, Kristiansen, Schmick, Carlyle, McCune, Springer, Kessler, Driscoll, Moeller, Kelley, Probst and Roach.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removes the requirement for Department of Licensing to have a mandatory replacement of license plates.

Hearing Date: 1/29/09

Staff: Jerry Long (786-7306)

Background:

In 1997, SHB 1008 was passed directing the Department of Licensing (DOL) to establish a plate replacement cycle to ensure maximum legibility and reflectivity of the license plates. Frequency of replacement shall be established in accordance with empirical studies documenting the longevity of the reflective materials used to make license plates. The last study was completed in 2006.

The DOL selected seven years from a combination of the reflective coating manufacturers' warranty of five years and looking at what other states do. From previous research, the Washington State Patrol has indicated that a plate may look fine, but the reflective coating deteriorates over time and makes plates more difficult to read at night.

All plates must be replaced on a seven-year cycle except for: prorated vehicles over 16,000 pounds; commercial vehicles with declared weight over 26,000 pounds; collector vehicles;

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horseless carriage vehicles; restored vehicles; government agencies; and Medal of Honor license plates.

Replacement plates are \$10 each, except for motorcycle plates which are \$2. The fees are deposited into the Motor Vehicle Account.

Summary of Bill:

The requirement for the DOL to mandate license plate replacement periodically is removed. The DOL may replace license plates upon request of the current owner if the functional lifetime of the plate has been exceeded. The functional lifetime of a license plate must be established in accordance with empirical studies documenting the longevity of the reflective materials used. The DOL may, upon the transfer of a vehicle, require the new vehicle owner to replace the license plates at the time of registration if the plates have exceeded their functional lifetime. The DOL will not require the replacement of license plates at other times.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.